



Presbytery of San José

June 12, 2026

Dear Members and Friends of the Presbytery of San José,

Greetings in the precious name of the Savior, Jesus Christ, in the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit!

After the writer of the book of Hebrews describes God's work through and call upon various faithful ones in ages past in chapter 11, chapter 12 begins with these familiar lines: "Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith" (Hebrews 12:1-2a). This season of Pentecost is a good emphasis on the power, person, and promise of the Holy Spirit, who unites us to the triune God and to every one of God's people in every time and in every place, and who inspires and enables us to follow the ways of Christ, teaching us how to follow more faithfully, deeply, and truly.

A week and a half ago, a slice of my father's side of the family gathered for a mini-reunion in Hayward. Each household brought a potluck dish, to which we placed it on a long table at my uncle's backyard, upon which were pieces of banana leaves. Here's a photo of that feasting table, where we enjoyed grilled tomahawk steaks, crawfish shipped from New Orleans, shrimp, grilled chicken, grilled fish, vegetables, noodles, rice, and so many other delicious food from Philippines and Guam:



The best part was being together, catching up with stories of our lives, laughing together, comforting each other with several deaths in our nuclear family in the past year, praying together, and hugging one another as we acknowledged the presence of our ancestors, our beloved family members who rest in the eternal embrace of our God.

We went to Juneau, Alaska as part of my service as a board member of New York-based Auburn Theological Seminary. Yes, if I was in a meeting with you last week via Zoom or on a phone call, I was working remotely from the land of glaciers. Auburn Seminary has a wonderfully impactful initiative of Storytelling and Narrative. It is a mission program of accompaniment and solidarity, participating in and creating

spaces where the stories of indigenous voices are shared, dignified, and celebrated. Essential to the justice work of healing and repairing historical harms is telling the truth, telling our stories, and having a community that receives those stories.

We were there not only to attend a board meeting, but to participate in Celebration, a biennial festival of native Alaskans who share their indigenous art, dances, and stories. We heard stories of generational trauma – individuals and communities bearing the emotional, spiritual, mental scars of abuse in boarding schools established over a century ago by Presbyterian, Episcopal, Methodist and Quaker missionaries who combined the work of evangelism with cultural erasure. We saw resilience of spirit, and many young people who proudly celebrated their heritage.

Each morning, gathered at a courtyard, was a prayer circle led by famed Alaskan storyteller and singer Yuxgitsiy George Holly. One morning he led embodied prayer as the sun was rising, and a new friend of the Inupiat nation captured this majestic scene:



One of the songs that George taught us later that week, under a tent in the midst of rain, was this prayer with body movements and which speaks of a hope or intention of inspiration for the day that is beginning. Listen, watch, and follow along with this recording I took of George teaching it to all of us in that circle of storytelling. It's easy, it's a catchy tune. It first begins with it in the Tlingit language, but keep listening because he repeats it afterward in English: <https://tinyurl.com/yjvrrry4>

Whether in Hayward, in Juneau, or in our Presbytery, around tables, we share the stories of our lives and of our faith. We do so, following in the cloud of witnesses who have walked these paths before us. What story is the Holy Spirit inspiring you to tell today or this week?

In Joy & Justice,

Neal

*Rev. Neal D. Presa, Ph.D, Executive Presbyter
(408) 763-5004 | Neal@sanjosephby.org*

*#CalledToCommunity
#CommittedToJustice*

EP's Upcoming Travels & Preaching/Speaking

June 8-12: World Council of Churches Executive Committee — via Zoom online

June 14: Worship & Attend Congregational Meeting at First Presbyterian Church — Santa Clara

June 15: Thought Leader Panel for engaging Pope Leo XIV's forthcoming encyclical, "Magnificas Humanitas" (Magnificent Humanity), on artificial intelligence, human dignity, and ethics, 6:00-7:15 pm — via Zoom online; sponsored by New College Berkeley

June 21: Preach, 10:30 am - Foothill Community Presbyterian Church — San José

June 25: Pastors Roundtable filming video on Artificial Intelligence and Faith — Menlo Park Church; sponsored by the University of Notre Dame, the Bay Area Center for Faith, Work & Tech, the Center for Ethical Intelligence, Transforming the Bay for Christ

June 27-July 2: 227th General Assembly (Milwaukee, WI)

If you would like to invite the EP to guest preach, facilitate a class, lead a retreat, help with strategic visioning/planning, or grab a cup of coffee, email Neal@sanjosepby.org or call/text (408) 763-5004.

Featured



4th NEAR Gathering Announced

The Presbytery is excited to announce plans for the 4th NEAR Gathering, taking place Saturday, September 26, 2026 (9:00 am to 1:00 pm) at Gilroy Presbyterian Church. This year's gathering takes up a pressing and timely theme: Christian Nationalism.

Event Info

Take Action:

Protect Immigration Support Funding

Community partners of the Presbytery, **Amigos de Guadalupe**, have asked to share urgent news regarding updates to their ongoing immigration advocacy work within the county: As of June, changes have been proposed to San Jose's immigration

support funding. Although the City originally budgeted \$1 million for community organizations providing on-the-ground services to local immigrant communities, there is now a proposal to freeze half of those funds in anticipation of possible future escalation. This would directly affect critical services already being offered to vulnerable neighbors in our community.

Residents of San Jose are encouraged to take timely action by sending a public comment to their local representatives in support of maintaining the full funding. Amigos de Guadalupe has prepared an email template to help community members respond. View it below:

Email Template & Instructions

This opportunity for action is shared by Veronica Ota, our Peacemaking & Justice Advocate. To stay involved, contact Veronica at Veronica@sanjosepb.org, consider joining the Peace and Justice Working Group, or connect with local partners such as Amigos de Guadalupe and other community-based immigrant justice organizations.

This Week



Mission and Outreach Working Group Roundtable Gathering Santa Teresa Hills Presbyterian Church *Tomorrow - June 13 at 11:30 a.m.

Come and join us for a roundtable gathering hosted by the Mission and Outreach Working Group (MAOWG). Mission committee chairpersons and members from across our presbytery are invited to take part in discussion and reflection.

The gathering will include a potluck luncheon and discussion time to share the joys and challenges of mission work within our congregations. It will be an opportunity to learn from one another's experiences and strengthen our shared ministry. Sandwiches and beverages will be provided. Attendees are welcome (but not required) to bring a salad, chips, or dessert to share.

MAOWG also hopes to compile a current list of mission chairpersons and their contact information from each congregation. This will help us communicate about upcoming events, available grant money, and future mission trips.

*You can contact Pam Siu (Chair of the Mission and Outreach Working Group) for more information or to provide mission chairperson's contact information here:
thesiufamily@yahoo.com.*



**Rise Against Hunger Meal Packaging Event
First Presbyterian Church - Palo Alto
Sunday, June 14 at 12:15 p.m.**

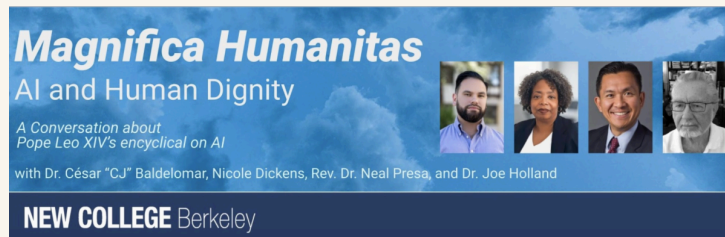
All are welcome to help fight world hunger at this meal-packaging event, co-hosted by First Presbyterian Church of Palo Alto and Covenant Presbyterian Church.

Grab a hairnet, find your station, and join volunteers from across our presbytery and community for a fun, fast-moving afternoon of service—where every meal you package brings us one step closer to ending hunger. Light refreshments, good music, and great company included!

No experience is needed, just a willingness to lend a hand and do some good alongside your neighbors. All ages and abilities are welcome. Whether you come solo or bring a group from your congregation, there's a place for you at the table.

Registration is optional but appreciated, as it helps the team plan. For more information, visit the link below or contact Cyndi Chin-Lee here: cynthiachinlee@gmail.com

Register & Learn More



**Magnifica Humanitas: AI & Human Dignity
Monday, June 15, 2026, 6:00 - 7:00 pm**

A friendly reminder to clergy & laypersons about the upcoming online conversation, “Magnifica Humanitas: AI & Human Dignity,” which will explore Pope Leo XIV’s first encyclical and its timely reflections on artificial intelligence, labor and the workplace, social relationships, and human dignity.

The conversation will feature Dr. César “CJ” Baldelomar, a scholar-teacher and member of the New College Berkeley teaching team, alongside a thoughtful panel including our very own **EP, the Rev. Dr. Neal Presa**.

Also in attendance will be Nicole Dickens, a Generative AI leader based in Silicon Valley, and Dr. Joe Holland, an eco-social philosopher, theologian, and prolific author.

All are warmly invited to join this ecumenical conversation on the ethical and theological questions AI raises for the life and witness of the Church.

[Register & Learn More](#)

In Case You Missed It



Presbytery Gifts Matching Funds to Legal Aid Partners

This week, the Presbytery of San José gathered in a small garden outside **Westhope Presbyterian Church** in Saratoga to mark a meaningful milestone. Surrounded by wildflowers, faith leaders, advocates, and partners came together to celebrate the Legal Aid Initiative - a fundraising effort that has raised over \$30,000 to support immigrant families facing some of the most uncertain days of their lives.

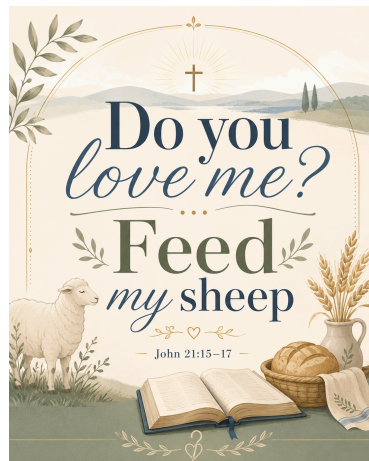
[Read Full Story](#)

*The event was also covered by **San José Spotlight**, giving us an opportunity to share this initiative with more of our community. You can read their article [here](#).*

A Place at the Table ☐○☐

SUMMER SPOTLIGHT

Rev. Ryan Althaus · Hunger Advocate



Supporting Hunger Relief Across the South Area

EBT cuts and CalFresh restrictions are a hot topic in the Bay Area as of late and hunger (be it social, physical, and/or spiritual) has become an increasingly urgent and

notably indiscriminate issue for many. However, as anxieties rise and fridges empty in households throughout the San Jose region let us first pause in prayerful reflection to recount how Jesus responded to a similar panic on the shores of Galilee multiple millennia ago with 2 meager fish & 5 loaves of bread.

The people went from hunger pangs to feelings of plenty that day, not simply because of calories consumed (though we are indeed called to take a physical approach to our call to 'feed the flock) but because of another kind of bread that our churches can offer in abundant supply [...]

[Read Full Article](#)

To learn more about ongoing hunger-related projects, or to share a resource of your own, you can contact Ryan at ryan@sanjosephy.org, or visit his website above.

Pieces on Peace ☮

JUNE EDITION

Veronica Ota · Peacemaking & Justice Advocate



Reflections from Zephyr Point's Justice Conference

I'm excited to share reflections on my experience of the Justice Conference at Zephyr Point in May. I am deeply grateful to have had the chance to attend the conference and see Lake Tahoe for the first time. An overarching theme of the conference was decolonizing Christianity. Here are my major takeaways [...]

[Continue Reading](#)

Good Growth Garden Wish List :

***Financial Donations Appreciated**

(Westview Presbyterian Church memo: Community Garden)

Garden Tools (Used or New)

Wheelbarrow
Garden Rake
Leaf Rake

Garden Supplies

Organic Garden Soil / Potting Soil
Seeds or Plant Starts
Wood Mulch

Shovels
Hand tools
Garden Gloves
Watering Can

Aged Manure
Boot Scrubber

If your congregation or community is engaged in a peace- or justice-centered ministry, launching a new initiative, or has a story worth sharing, you can contact Veronica at veronica@sanjosepy.org

Unity Candle ☐

WEEK OF JUNE 14th



Comunidad LatinoAmericana (NCD) San Jose

This week, we invite you to pray for the ministries of Iglesia Cristiana Comunidad Latinoamericana, one of two New Church Developments within the Presbytery of San José. We give thanks for the leadership of Pastor Rev. Stella Pardo Matusiewicz and Elder Mike Matusiewicz, along with all the Elders and congregants who help support this community in worship and growth.

Comunidad LatinoAmericana is a Spanish-speaking community of faith rooted in prayer, discipleship, and weekly offerings. For more than a decade, they have offered members of the Latin American community Bible study classes, youth prayer circles, as well as language classes. Their ministry continues to create space for people to gather, deepen their faith, and find belonging in the wider Christian Reformed tradition.

In early 2024, Comunidad LatinoAmericana moved to its current church home at 5150 Camden Avenue in San José. Since then, the community has continued to grow its ministry with faithfulness and open arms to those of the greater San José area.

The congregation gathers for worship on Sundays from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Their weekly schedule also includes Youth Prayer on Mondays from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.; Prayer and Bible Study on Wednesdays from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.; Free English Classes on Sundays from 8:00 to 10:00 a.m.; and Free Spanish as a Second Language Class on Sundays from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. Please hold Comunidad LatinoAmericana in prayer this week as they host the Unity Candle — that their ministry and care for their community may continue to be strengthened and blessed.

To learn more about this week's congregation, you can visit their website here:
[Comunidad LatinoAmericana](http://www.comunidadlatinoamericana.org)

Follow the path of the Unity Candle here:
<http://tinyurl.com/SJUnity2025>

Clergy Reminders

Retired Clergy Reunion Luncheon Presbyterian Church of Los Gatos Wednesday, September 9, 11:30 a.m

A friendly invitation to all Retired Teaching Elders and Clergy across the Presbytery of San Jose to save the date for a first-ever lunch fellowship gathering, taking place on Wednesday, September 9, at 11:30am at Presbyterian Church of Los Gatos.

This special gathering will be co-hosted by the Rev. Jack Longley, HR, Parish Associate at Presbyterian Church Los Gatos, and EP Neal Presa, with grant support from the Church Health & Growth Working Group. Retired clergy are warmly invited to gather for a meaningful time of fellowship, connection and conversation.

Registration is now Available at the link below. *RSVP Now through August 15th.*

RSVP NOW!

Save the Date!

Leaders of Color Retreat Zephyr Point Conference Center October 19 - 22, 2026

Save the Date!



**OCTOBER 19-22
2026**

**ZEPHYR POINT
CONFERENCE
CENTER**

CLERGY OF COLOR AND CHURCH LEADERS OF COLOR IN THE
PRESBYTERIES OF SAN JOSE, SAN
FRANCISCO, REDWOODS, AND NORTH CENTRAL CALIFORNIA ARE
INVITED TO REGISTER.

+ Registration & more details will be shared in the coming months.

Event Info

Employment Opportunities

The Presbytery is always hiring. Visit our Employment Opportunities page below to see what congregations or Presbytery-affiliated organizations are looking to fill a position.



[View Jobs](#)

www.sanjosepby.org

[View as Webpage](#)

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